

## **TRAINING GAMES FOR UNDER 6S TO UNDER 9S**

Every game should be played with both the strong and then the weak foot every time the game is played. Even from the age of 5 will learn quickly if they are encouraged to use both feet in every game, every session.

### **Bumper cars**

#### Objective:

Improve dribbling skills while keeping heads up, passing technique

No of players: Whole team and some adults

#### Set up:

Create a 20x30 metre playing area with flat cones and create a smaller rectangle just outside the playing area.

#### How to play:

The players and the adults dribble a ball around the playing area. The children try to bump (pass) their "car" (the soccer ball) into an adult's "car." If an adult's car is "bumped," the adult must take their car to the repair shop (an adjacent, small area designated by cones), and cannot leave until they count to 10.

Adults should encourage the children ("you can't catch me" etc.) so that the kids try very hard to bump their car. As many parents as possible can play - kids LOVE to send their parents to the repair shop. Older siblings also are great targets.

### **Bill's Gates**

#### Objective:

To improve your team's spacing on the pitch.

No of players: 4-7 players.

#### Set up:

Mark out a 20x30 metre playing area and place a goal at either end. Use flat cones to make two small gates (about three metres wide) on the pitch near the half line and about twenty metres apart. Split your squad into two teams.

### How to play:

Play football. A goal counts as two points and a pass through one of the gates to a teammate is worth one point (the same gate cannot be passed through twice in a row). First team to ten points wins.

### **Bulldog**

Players: All

Skills used: Dribbling, tackling

Set-up: Mark out 15x15 square.

Objective:

To be the last attacker to be tackled by a defender.

Description:

Attackers each have a ball and line up along one side of the square. Their aim is to dribble to the other side without being tackled. One defender (child or adult) stands in the middle of the square facing the attackers.

The defender tries to tackle attackers as they dribble past. When an attacker is tackled they become an additional defender. When all of the attackers have reached the opposite side of the square, or have been tackled, the remaining attackers then try to dribble back. Repeat this until one attacker remains.

### **Through the gates**

Players: Whole squad

Skills used: Dribbling

Set-up:

Make a square 15mx15m. Make 6 or 7 small gates inside the square. Each gate consists of 2 cones approx 1m apart. The gates should be randomly distributed around the square. The players stand inside the square each with a ball.

Objective:

To dribble through as many gates as possible in 90 seconds.

### Description:

Each player has a ball which they try to dribble through as many different gates as quickly as they can. They need to look up while they are dribbling to ensure that they won't bump into each other.

At the end of the 90 seconds the coach should ask the players how many gates they got through.

### Variations:

Pair up the players. One ball per pair. All pairs play at the same time. The player with the ball dribbles to a cone. The player without the ball runs parallel to the dribbler. When they reach the gate the dribbler passes through the gate to their partner. The partner now becomes the dribbler. If there are an odd number of players create a team of three.

Stop the exercise after 90 seconds. Find out how many gates they got through.

*The players are the gates.*

Half the players stand in random locations with their legs apart. These players remain stationary. The other players have a ball each. They try to dribble their ball to the gate, then pass it through the legs and run around to get it again.

### **All in the square**

Players: Whole squad

Skills used: Dribbling whilst looking up

Set-up:

Make a 20x20m square. All players stand inside with a ball at their feet.

Objective:

To be the quickest to stop the ball or change direction.

Description:

The coach tells the players that when s/he raises one arm in the air the players must start dribbling in the opposite direction. When the coach raises both arms the player must stop and put a foot on top of the ball. The players dribble in any direction they choose until the coach signals. If the players dribble too slowly encourage them to speed up. Praise the player who reacts quickest to the signal

## **Marbles**

Players: Up to 10

No. of balls: 1 ball each plus a distinctive looking ball to be the 'marble'.

Skills used: Passing, receiving

Set-up:

Place 2 lines of cones 5 metres apart. Divide the players into 2 teams. Each team stands along one of the lines facing the other team.

Objective:

To knock the 'marble' over your opponent's line by kicking a ball into the marble.

Description:

Players kick a ball from behind their line into the marble. They can use whichever ball is nearest to them. Discourage players from running into the area between the two lines where the marble is located. Encourage the players to control any ball that is coming across their line as it will be quicker to stop a ball than chase after it.

## **Numbers**

Players: Up to 6 per game

No. of balls: 2 or 3

Skills used: Dribbling, tackling, shooting

Set-up:

Mark out a 3 metre goal. Pair the players up with someone of approximately equal ability. Give each pair a number. Line the players up about 10 metres away from the goals.

Objective: To score a goal.

Description:

The coach kicks the ball into play and calls out one the number of one of the pairs. Both players of that pair run to the ball. They compete against each other

to win the ball and try to score. As soon as the ball goes out of play repeat with another pair.

Tips:

If there are more than 6 players play two games simultaneously. Set up two goals about 10 metres apart. The goals should be in line with each other not facing each other. If there is an odd number of players make one 'pair' a group of 3.

Variations:

After every pair has had a couple of attempts call out two numbers at the same time. Eg '1 and 3 go!'. This game can then be played as two teams against each other or as every player for themselves.

**Get to the line**

Players: Whole squad

Skills used: Dribbling, tackling

Set-up:

Mark out two parallel lines approximately 10-15m apart. Place players into pairs of roughly equal ability. The pair stand on opposite lines facing each other. One of them has a ball and is the attacker. The other one is the defender.

Objective:

To dribble the ball past your partner and stop the ball on the opposite line.

Description:

When the coach says 'go' all the players with a ball dribble towards the opposite line. The defender runs towards their own attacker and tries to tackle them. The attacker carries on trying to get to the line until they are tackled or lose control of the ball. When an attacker reaches the line they must stop the ball on it. After half a minute call 'stop'.

Ask the attackers how many of them reached the other line. Get the players to swap roles with their partner and repeat.

## **Dribble then shoot**

Players: 4 or 5

Skills used: Dribbling, shooting

Set-up:

Mark out a 15 metre sided square with a gate in the middle. On one side of the square mark a 3 metre wide goal. The players line up with one ball each on the opposite side of the square.

Objective:

To dribble the ball through the gate then score.

Description:

The players form a line. The coach stands behind the goal ready to stop the shots. The first player dribbles through the gate. As soon as they are through they gate they must shoot. The second player begins to dribble their ball to the gate as soon as the first player is through it. This makes for continuous play. When the coach stops the ball, the player collects their ball and dribbles to the back of the line. By keeping the numbers low all the players will be active at the same time either dribbling or retrieving their balls.

After three or four minutes stop the game and ask the players who scored the most goals. Then repeat the drill again.

Variation:

Set up two games of 'dribble then shoot' next to each other. The players add up all the goals scored by the players in their game to see if they can score more than the players in the other game.

## **Snatch**

Objective:

To improve ball control tackling and passing.

Number of players:

If you have more than 7 players, create two playing areas and play two games of Snatch alongside each other.

### Set up:

Create two 8x8m playing areas with a 3-metre gap between them. Divide your players into two teams, one per playing area. Each player has a number. One ball per team.

### How to play:

Each team dribbles and passes the ball in their playing area. You shout a number and the corresponding player runs into the other team's square and tries to win the ball. If they win the ball and kick it out of the square they get one point for their team. If they can win the ball and take it back into their square they get three points. Allow twenty seconds for a snatch to take place.

### **Goal wars**

Objective: To improve dribbling and shooting skills.

Number of players: Whole team.

### Set up:

Minimum of one ball per child and preferably more. Place two goals next to each other on the same line, about 5ms apart. Place a cone about 10ms in front of the goals, and centred between them. Place half your footballs next to goal A and half next to goal B (making sure there is at least one ball per child).

### How to play:

Divide your players into two teams and have each team line up next to a goal each. Players dribble a football round the cone then shoot at the opposite goal (i.e., team A shoot at goal B and vice versa). After several minutes, the whistle blows, and the team with the most balls in "their" goal wins.

### **Practice matches**

Play 20 mins of games to finish each training session

Set-up: Mark out pitches approx 20x15 metres with 2 metre wide goals at each end.

Description: Put the players into games of 1v2, 2v2 or 3v2. If necessary an adult can be used to make a 1 v 2 into 2v2. The adult should try to avoid too much contact with the ball.

Tips: Stop games after about 5 minutes. Rotate the teams so that they play a team from another pitch.